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Ministry of Advanced Education

GRANT BOOSTS RADIOGRAPHY TECH TRAINING SPACES

BURNABY – A grant of over $328,000 will allow the B.C. Institute of Technology to expand first-year spaces in British Columbia's only medical radiography technology program by 25 per cent, Advanced Education Minister Murray Coell announced today.

"We're educating more health professionals than ever before to provide the care British Columbians will need in the future, including high-quality diagnostic services," Coell said. "This new funding to BCIT is a great example of government support that will pay for equipment, renovations and operating costs to allow more students to start training as medical radiography technologists next month."

Medical radiography technologists use computer-generated images to help health-care teams make medical diagnoses, from simple X-rays for a broken bone to more sophisticated examinations used to detect heart, blood vessel or brain abnormalities. Over the past three years, 100 per cent of BCIT's graduates have found jobs in hospitals and private medical labs.

The new funding will add 16 first-year seats, bringing to 80 the number of students who will begin the 30-month program this January. The $328,200 grant from the Province includes $125,000 to buy an extra X-ray machine and to renovate a room to house it. The Province also provided $95,000 last year to help BCIT buy a new X-ray unit for medical radiography students.

"BCIT is focused on producing job-ready graduates, working with industry to identify and respond to the demand for more health workers," said Kathy Kinloch, dean of BCIT's School of Health Sciences. "With this additional funding support, we can continue to provide our students with a top-notch technical education, as well as equip the province's health-care sector with more of these specialized medical radiology technologists."

Earlier this year, the Province provided $1.1 million to start a new medical laboratory technology program at the College of New Caledonia in Prince George, which will accept its first 18 students in January. Medical lab technologists conduct complex tests on blood, body fluids and tissue to help diagnose and treat illnesses.

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The two programs are part of government's expansion of health-care professional programs, so B.C. can graduate more doctors, nurse practitioners, registered nurses, licensed practical nurses and other health professionals. This year, 326 new spaces have been allocated to nursing programs, bringing the total increase since 2001 to 3,347, or 82 per cent. As well, the number of first-year medical students has been doubled since 2004, from 128 to 256.

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